

FAIRFAX RESCUE FY'23 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Michael Wheeler from Fairfax Rescue was present. They are looking for level funding of \$12,064. Their call volume and volunteerism increased during COVID, which brings them more revenue which allows them to level fund even though there are increases elsewhere.

Westford had seventy-two calls out of over five hundred calls total for the past fiscal year. Fairfax Rescue covers about two thirds of Westford's population. Bill asked Michael what he can tell him about dispatching. Michael explained that dispatching is through St. Albans Dispatch center, which is where Fairfax Rescue gets dispatched. They have no say in the fees that St. Albans Dispatch charges. Other parties such as the Vermont State Police and third-party companies have investigated supplying dispatching, but none have the bandwidth for it. Bill asked if they pursued a different dispatching service would Fairfax Rescue be willing to work with Westford on that. They were. There is infrastructure that would need to be involved for a signal to reach Fairfax. Because of the high cost that St. Albans Dispatch charges Westford in comparison Bill thinks this is worth looking into. Dave believes it may be something the ARPA Committee could look at.

DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEW BOARD FY'23 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Matt Wamsganz from the Developmental Review Board (DRB) presented their FY'23 budget proposal. The DRB is proposing \$7,325, which is level funded. Bill noted that in the last budget cycle the DRB had carved from their budget more than any other town organization.

PLANNING COMMISSION FY'23 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Mark Letorney from the Planning Commission (PC) presented their FY'23 budget proposal. The PC is proposing \$14,950, which is a 28% increase from last year's funding to cover an increase in legal and professional fees and the inclusion of a Minute Clerk. They have spent less than their full budget in recent years. A list of the Special Project Reserve Account Liabilities and Balance/Revenue was submitted with the budget proposal.

Bill preferred to keep the Minute Clerk within individual budgets versus a single Minute Clerk position for transparency. There are boards that would use the Clerk much more than others. Dave thought this also might cross over in discussion on the Grant Writer, as it becomes a comparable situation with one board or commission using those funds more than others. Bill feels like if money is used in a certain segment it needs to be accounted to them.

TOWN PLANNER FY'23 BUDGET PROPOSAL

The Town Planner, Melissa Manka, presented her FY'23 budget proposal. She is requesting a 28% increase in funding. Much of the increase is coming from her request to hire a Developmental Review Board Coordinator/Administrative Assistant.

Melissa explained that currently she staffs two boards as well as supports other boards and committees, meets with the public, and Regional Planning Commission amongst other things. The added help she is requesting is necessary. Even prior to the complex current projects like community wastewater there was a need for aid. Much depends on how many development inquiries and DRB applications are received, which is an unknown. Regardless of that there are several items for many years that should be addressed for the Town to be most effective and efficient that are perpetually set to the side unaddressed such as DRB process, updating forms, updating ordinances, getting to amendments more quickly, updating digital parcel maps which is required by the state now, etc. The assistant could be used regardless; the need is and has been present. Nanette asked if an assistant were hired for Planning and Zoning

would that individual be also able to help the Zoning Administrator? Melissa confirmed that this would be possible. Dave acknowledged that Melissa has an added request on the list for her number of remote workdays be increased.

ARTISAN VENDORS ON THE TOWN COMMON

Jenny Hughes contacted the Board to ask if the Town would support insurance for artisan (non-food) vendors to offer more local shopping options. Most non-food vendors are non-commercial hobbyists and cannot afford the liability insurance vendor markets like the Farmers' Market require.

Dave would like to get to a point where this is a 'yes' so that we can help out small artisan vendors. He feels we get guidance on items like this that is a bit too conservative. This is a reasonable risk to take on in his opinion. He understands how food and beverages would be different. Bill and Lee agreed. Dave would like to ask VLCT about using the Town Common Use application for non-food vendors and that way we could assess the risk of what is potentially being sold. Dave suggested giving responsibility to the Common Committee to draft up more policy. He was happy to take on the risk and take on the liability to help local vendors.

REQUEST TO IMPROVE SECTION OF GOODRICH TRAIL AS A DRIVEWAY

Jamie Hazen is requesting permission to improve a part of the Goodrich Trail to driveway standards so that he could access the new house he is building. Jamie was present and had photographs that show the town trail and the property lines as well as a sketch diagram of the area of improvement which is approximately 168 square feet of trail. Jamie explains that the driveway in the current condition was put in for logging use.

The Town had done such agreements between themselves and landowners when they had other property that was accessed by trails. Nanette explained the general process and suggested contacting the Town Attorney.

Sarah Pinto from the Conservation Commission was present. She explained the Conservation Commission had no objection to this. Jamie additionally explained that the road in Underhill that connects to the town trail is a declassified Class IV Road.

RENAME PORTION OF GOODRICH TRAIL TO REPA ROAD TO MEET 911 STANDARDS

Nanette talked with Tyler Hermanson of the Vermont Enhanced 911 Board and the Town of Underhill. A house is being built off the Goodrich Trail where it connects to Repa Road at the Underhill town line. Tyler suggested that a part of the trail be renamed to Repa Road so that there is better clarity for emergency purposes when assigning a number to the new house.

Dave would like to do what is best for 911 standards and resident safety. He supports moving forward with the name change. Bill and Lee also had no objection but agreed that further counsel with the Town Attorney would be helpful.

GUIDANCE FROM HEALTH OFFICER REGARDING MITIGATING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES

Devin Porter, Health Officer, did a site visit to the office and came back to the Board with suggestions on mitigating COVID risks and improving quality and health of employees. These included immediate, near-term, and long-term goals.

The immediate strategies included requiring masks for all visitors regardless of vaccination status, opening windows and doors for improved ventilation as weather permits, and running bathroom and downstairs exhaust fans to improve air exchange.

The near-term strategies included buying a portable HEPA fan-filter unit, investigating filtration via the existing HVAC system, and replacing the downstairs exhaust fans with quieter in-line duct fans.

The long-term strategy was investigating installation of a new HVAC system, although Devin reiterates that all these strategies are only part of the COVID-prevention puzzle and vaccination, masking, distances, and good hygiene practices are still critical.

Dave thinks focusing on the ventilation improvements would be a big part of mitigating COVID risk in the office and feels ARPA funds could be used to help with the upgrades. He suggests moving forward with having Devin investigate the HVAC. Dave will work with Devin and Nanette to see what system will work best. Dave does not feel the long-term strategies would best serve the Town Office, especially if it were to move or need serious renovation in the future. Dave Baczewski made a motion for the Selectboard to approve the expenditure ARPA funds up to \$10,000 to go towards the near-term strategies proposed by Devin Porter, Town Heath Officer, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

ARPA COMMITTEE UPDATE

Dave Baczewski from the APRA Committee was present. He explained what had occurred at their last meeting. The Committee completed their charge; Dave also explained the committee members and their roles. They established a shared committee email address and will be sending out a survey. ARPA also has a page on the Town website. Currently they are at a spending pause while they develop their submission process.

CYBER SECURITY SOLUTIONS AND QUOTE

VLCT sent out a survey to all towns to see what protections towns have in place to protect infrastructure from hacking. There were four items that came up that Westford falls short in that could jeopardize insurance coverage for. VT Connections, our IT service provider, provided a quote to address the areas that we lack to make our system more secure. Implementing the protections will result in a one-time expense as well as a reoccurring monthly charge.

Bill had reservations about the price tag. Nanette reiterated the system that is most vulnerable is our financial records. It would leave personal information and financial information at risk. Nanette was not sure if this item had to be taken care of immediately, but she was concerned that our insurance company could come back to us about the vulnerability and refuse to cover our computer system. Dave agreed that the monthly fee seems high. Nanette will contact our insurance company to see how the vulnerabilities will impact us. The Board would like to investigate other options.

INTERIM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR COORDINATOR & CCRPC REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBER APPOINTMENT

Helen Sterling was present and was interested in both positions. Bill thought Helen looked qualified. She explained she wants to help support the community and has a lot of experience doing this at a national level. The question came down to which position would Helen's skills best benefit. Francois Ross had also expressed interest in the Interim Emergency

Management Director Coordinator position. Dave felt Helen would best be able to help in an emergency immediately. Bill recalls that Westford often has a difficult time filling positions like this so he wouldn't want to reject interest from anybody wanting to get involved. Dave explains he is just looking out for the best interests of the Town. Helen could help in an emergency right now, since this is an interim position, he feels this is best.

Melissa explained the role of the CCRPC Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC) member. Lee asked if Helen felt she was able to do both. She felt it was possible. Bill did not want to discourage Francois and suggested he could be an alternate Interim Emergency Manager in cases when Helen is not in town. Helen was willing to sit down with Francois and offer him her knowledge. Dave reiterated Helen's thought process that this emergency preparation takes a lot of time. The more people we have that understand it the better for the Town. Lee McClenny made a motion to appoint Helen Sterling and Francois Ross as the Interim Emergency Management Co-Director Coordinators and to appoint Helen to the CCRPC Regional Emergency Management Committee, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0.

APPRAISAL CONTRACT FOR 1705 VT 128 PROPERTY

Melissa mentioned it is for a commercial appraisal and the expense was included in a VCDP grant. Lee McClenny made a motion that The Board sign the Appraisal Contract for the 1705 Property, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

Nanette and Greg had responded to a resident asking questions about the tax rate implications for the community wastewater system.

Bill stated that he recently hunted in the Maple Shade Town Forest and feels it is a great piece of land. A resident had recently brought up the Forest Management Plan for that parcel and how timbering could bring money to the Town. It is Bill's observation that the forest is currently over mature, and this gives game nothing to feed on. Timbering the property in a sensible way could be mutually beneficial to game, hunters, residents wanting firewood, and the Town. Bill wanted to reach out to the Conservation Commission and to Ethan Tapper who had helped draft the Forest Management Plan. Lee and Dave had no issues.

COMMUNICATION

Dave will be putting out information about ARPA.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS

Greg Barrows, Treasurer, reviewed the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Cleary, Selectboard Chair

Callie Hamdy
Assistant Town Clerk/Minute Clerk

GUEST LIST

Michael Wheeler (Fairfax Rescue)
Ben Bornstein
Helen Sterling
Dave Lavalley
Tonya Calley
Matt Wamsganz
Melissa Manka
Mark Letorney
Jamie Hazen
Sarah Pinto

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
October 15, 2021 – October 28, 2021**

Work to be done

- Grade roads as needed.
- Start brush cutting.
- Put winter tires and wing plows on the trucks.
- Service the trucks.

Work completed

- Graded a section of Old Stage Rd., a section of Cambridge Rd.
- Finished a project on Cowie Rd.
- Turnaround work on Seymour Rd.

Approved at the 10/28/21 Selectboard Meeting.